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556 generations.[3] These conditions accounted for the lack of a permanent ruling caste in China. There are definite ideals in traditional Chinese culture which conditioned the upward and downward mobility of the people within the social hierarchy.

B. Social Mobility

596 428 618 The family ideal. Large families, especially of the extended type, were the ideal in China.[4] However, in practice the ideal was limited by economic means. Primogeniture in China had been done away with long before the Manchu Dynasty (1644-1912). Land was divided equally among sons. After successive divisions, individual holdings became infinitesimally small. This contributed to the decline of the economic status of even the wealthiest families, particularly when land was the sole source of income.[5] On the other

3. Martin Yang, A Chinese Village, New York, 1945, p. 132; Francis Hsu, Under the Ancestors' Shadow, New York, Columbia University Press, 1948, p. 4.

4. Consult the chapter on The Family in this handbook.

5. "In the matter of inheritance, the general pattern observed for poor agriculturalists holds very well for the merchant group. Just as at the death of a farmer, there is a sharing of the property. In the agricultural situation, however, there seems to be greater fragmentation of the legacy, each son working his share more or less independently and with a minimum of combination.
(continued next page)

hand, because of the existence of extended families and the clan structure, less fortunate members of these groups might be helped by relatives to gain a living or an education. A substantial amount of land was usually allotted to the communal family or clan for religious, educational, or charity purposes by illustrious members of the family or clan. Nepotism was simply a projection of the family ideal of mutual help among the members. Clan nepotism often accounted for a man's rise on the social and economic ladder. This practice contributed to the upward movement of poorer segments of the population who otherwise might never have advanced socially and economically in a relatively short period of time.

The scholar ideal. Learning was much esteemed, especially when combined with wealth. The prestige of the wealthy was never complete until their wealth was adorned with culture. Indication of respect for learning was common in China, as typified by the saying: "Although your children may be of low intelligence, you as parents should make them

5. (continued) In the merchant situation there is somewhat more cohesion among the heirs, who often work the inherited enterprise as partners." Fried, op. cit., p. 52.

577 ground for loyalty to the state and the virtues
829 prized by it as part of the machinery of government. The root virtue of filial piety was extolled above all others in the Confucian system. It denoted not only the obedience and devotion of the son to his father but of the younger brother to the elder, and of the subject to the ruler.

• 618 Two types of organizations built on the foundation of the family were utilized by the state in maintaining peace and uniformity throughout the empire. One was the clan, or tsu. It bound together families with a common ancestor to promote their security and advancement. Relying for strength on the maximizing and formalizing of kinship ties, the tsu reinforced the authority of the family head and the values he imparted to the younger generation. The tsu settled disputes between families, conducted ancestor rites for any member of a family whose line died out, provided help and protection in times of trouble for the lower class members, and safeguarded the social and economic position of the well-to-do. Where the tsu was strong, it governed the village with little interference from the central government, except in matters of high crime and taxes. The advantages to the Confucian state of the tsu were deemed sufficient to compensate for its encroachment on the

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618 state's jurisdiction.[5]

In gathering together all the members of the tsu for the yearly rites honoring its ancestors, this social institution served to bring the poor and uncultured into contact with, and under the influence of, the well-to-do and educated gentry. Its more accomplished members headed the clan and represented the closest approximation to the ideal of the "superior man" (chün-tzu). Meetings with such men, whose behavior was patterned by leisure and education beyond the means of the great majority of society, provided the lower classes with living models for emulation and opportunities to impress the young with the proper attitude of respect toward their social superiors.

631 591 Another institution based on the family utilized by the state was the pao-chia system. As it was constituted under the Ch'ing Dynasty (1644 to 1912) and again in the 1930's by the National Government, ten adjacent families were grouped as a p'ai, ten p'ai as a chia, and ten chia, or one thousand households, as a pao. The head of each unit was responsible for the conduct and defense of those households under him, and the head of the pao had to answer to the government for the conduct

5. On the clan see Hu Hsien-chin, The Common Descent Group in China and Its Functions (Viking Fund Publications in Anthropology, No. 10), New York, The Viking Fund, Inc., 1948.

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594 582 The change was evident in Olga Lang's 1937 findings on the comparative form and function of the family in the cities of Shanghai, Peiping (Peking), and Tientsin, and in rural areas removed from the urban influence. In every facet of the nature and values of the family among all classes in these places, Shanghai showed the greatest departure from the traditional family system and ideology.[43] But even where modernization was most advanced, Lang found that of ninety-five industrial workers' families interviewed, only 25 per cent of the marriages had been formed by free choice of the partners, and fifty-six of the ninety-six men and women workers questioned said they would insist on choosing their children's mates.[44] However, it should be noted that the tendency toward modern marriages increased with higher economic class, better education, and occupation in modern industry or professions.

B. The Clan

618 By the twentieth century, the vitality of the clan had deteriorated throughout most of the East China Region. Some vestiges of it still remained in Chekiang, Anhwei, Kiangsu, and

43. Lang, op. cit., pp. 120-327.

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618 Shantung, but the institution was not vital to the people of those provinces.[45] In Fukien (and neighboring Kwangtung in the Central-South Region) where the clan had reached the highest stage of development, it still played a major role in society up to World War II.[46]

621 618 Where the clan was strong, villages were wholly or predominately made up of members of one clan.[47] This fact permitted clan administration of the village independent of the state, except in the matter of taxes, major crimes, and the necessity of registering marriages. The village governed itself through clan enforcement of centuries-old customs inculcated by the family. Clan rule was not weakened when the Republic introduced officials at the village subdistrict levels, where none had existed under the imperial government. The new officials were recruited from the same group which had managed the clans, and clan and government

45. Hu, op. cit., pp. 10-11, and passim; Lang, op. cit., pp. 178-79. Also see the description of the minor role played by the clan in the Kiangsu villages investigated by Fei Hsiao-tung (t'ung), Peasant Life in China: A Field Study of Country Life in the Yangtze Valley, London, Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner & Co., Ltd., 1939, pp. 84-86; and in the Anhwei village investigated by Morton H. Fried, Fabric of Chinese Society: A Study of the Social Life of a Chinese County Seat, New York, Praeger, 1953, pp. 92-95.

46. Hu, op. cit., pp. 10-11; Lang, op. cit., pp. 173-78.

47. Hu, op. cit., pp. 10-11.

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621 posts were often held by the same individual.[48]

618 However, even in its last stronghold, the clan was a dying institution. Its authority was being undermined by the growing disproportion of wealth among its members, the dissatisfactions arising from misappropriation of clan wealth, and the subversive forces of industrialization, modernization, and modern city life. At the same time, traditional leadership was being challenged by younger men who had demonstrated their natural abilities by the acquisition of wealth, a modern education, or an official position. Lang's investigation of two Fukien clans in 1936 showed their leadership consisted of two merchants, one landlord, and the owner of a private school.[49]

Administrative positions in the clan were sought because they controlled immense wealth which could be manipulated to increase individual or family influence or fortunes. Besides the duties of keeping the peace among the institution's composite branches and families, the clan hierarchy was responsible for the maintenance of the ancestral temple, the conduct of ancestor worship, the defense of clan interests before the

48. Lang, op. cit., pp. 177-78.

49. Ibid., pp. 175-76; Hu, op. cit., pp. 89-90, 98-100.

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government authorities, and the administration of clan property. In Fukien, the clan possessed smaller holdings than in Kwangtung, where fifty to seventy per cent of the land cultivated by clan members was estimated to be under clan control, but was still a dominant factor in the village economy and the livelihood of clan members.[50]

With the victory of the Communists in the East China Region in 1949, the functional existence of the clan ceased. In Fukien, where it had occupied a major social role, the disappearance of the clan left behind a pattern of independence from central government control and of familial order and loyalty that may not be easily erased by the Communists' authoritarian regime.

C. Overseas Communities

A unique departure along the coast of Fukien (and Kwangtung in the Central-South Region) from the general family pattern in China has necessitated much innovation and adjustment by the Communist regime. From the coastal area of Fukien have come more Chinese emigrants to Southeast Asia and other parts of the world than from any other province in China with the exception of Kwangtung.

50. Ibid., pp. 173-78.